

CHAPTER 28

SPECIALTY MEALS

GENERAL

Specialty meals provide the FSS and contractor with an opportunity to offer diners a change from everyday menus. They may be enhanced with decor items that support the selected theme.

These meals provide an excellent opportunity to share in the observance of numerous ethnic celebrations such as Afro-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Native American, and others. They are also well-suited to mark observance of national holidays such as: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Washington's Birthday, Independence Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving and Christmas. Figure 28-1 (page 28-1) is a sample menu that could be used for an Independence Day celebration.

Regional-type foods have become increasingly popular with military diners. Other specialty meals

such as Super Suppers and monthly birthday dinners add to the variety offered to dining facility patrons. The FSS should determine what specialty meals would be most popular with patrons and plan accordingly.

BUFFET MEALS

Buffet type meals present an alternative method for serving specialty meals that can increase diner participation and satisfaction. Buffets offer attractively displayed food items, and they reduce the number of serving personnel needed. Buffets give simple, fast service for breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. You may also offer buffets along with cafeteria-style service to reduce long lines. Special buffets planned around a central theme, such as a Hawaiian luau, help build morale.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

As Independence Day is commemorated, we often think of barbecues and outdoor entertaining. Dining facility patrons may enjoy this special menu which includes summertime favorites.

Pineapple Chicken (L-157)	Barbecued Spareribs (L-92)
Grilled Steak (L-7)	
Boston Baked Beans (Q-3)	Parsley Potatoes (Q-77)
Calico Corn (Q-27)	Lyonnais Green Beans (Q-7)
Tossed Vegetable Salad (M-48)	Fruit Medley Salad (M-32)
Assorted Bread	Margarine
Apple Pie (I-8)	Vanilla Ice Cream (J-24)
Strawberry Fruit Cup (J-6-4)	
Coffee (C-5)	Iced Tea (C-13)
Lowfat and/or 2-Percent Milk	

Figure 28-1. Sample Independence Day menu

Buffet Menu

Buffet meals may vary from an evening, cold buffet to a semiformal meal with one or more hot items. Food items may include a variety of meat, fish, and poultry entrees. Appetizers such as cheese balls, deviled eggs, and Swedish meatballs are quick and easy to prepare. Vegetables and starches such as creamed asparagus, scalloped potatoes, rice pilaf, duchess potatoes, and cauliflower au gratin are good dishes for buffets. Many types of salads, soups, and desserts are also appropriate. A relatively formal buffet may include an item such as a steamship round, a prime rib, or a decorated standing rib roast.

Arrangement

Foods served as buffets should be attractively arranged. Different shapes and sizes of dishes arranged at varying heights around a centerpiece offer the diner an appealing setting. The centerpiece may be a decorative floral arrangement, a mock ham or decorated turkey, a horn of plenty,

fruit and flower trays, or an ice carving. The ice carving may also be functional. For example, a decorative shrimp boat may also hold the shrimp and shrimp cocktail sauce. China is normally placed at the head of the buffet table. Set the food items at varying heights to make it easier for soldiers to serve themselves and to improve appeal. Foods used strictly for decoration should be placed behind those to be served. Arrange flowers, candles, and other decorative pieces throughout the display on the buffet table. Make the table easy to replenish. Remember to place cold foods first and hot foods last. The dining room may have to be rearranged for a buffet meal.

Service

You usually use self-service with buffets. However, if meats are to be carved, food service personnel will have to carve and serve them. Chafing dishes, warming trays, cold pans, and other similar items may be needed on the buffet table.